

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph [0015] as follows:

[0015] When the side of the rocker arm 42 applies a downward pressing force to the plunger 20, the valve port 24 is closed by the valve element 33 such that the high-pressure chamber 31 is tightly closed, whereupon the hydraulic fluid filling the high-pressure chamber 31 prevents the plunger 20 from moving downward. See Fig. 3. Further, when the plunger 20 is moved upward such that the volume of the high-pressure chamber 31 is increased and the pressure is reduced, the valve element 33 is moved downward relative to the plunger 20 to depart from the valve seat face 25, thereby opening the valve port 24. See Fig. 4. As a result, the hydraulic fluid flows from the low-pressure chamber 23 into the high-pressure chamber 31, so that the interior of the high-pressure chamber 31 remains filled with the hydraulic fluid. Upon the stopping of the upward movement of the plunger 20, the valve element 33 is urged by the first spring 34 to abut the valve seat face 25, whereby the valve port 24 is closed. As a result, the high-pressure chamber 31 is filled with the hydraulic fluid and tightly closed.

Please amend paragraph [0019] as follows:

[0019] Mechanical characteristics of the silicon nitride containing ceramic made into the valve element 33 of the lash adjuster A are as follows. The silicon nitride ceramic has a specific gravity of 3.2, a hardness of 1500 [HV], a linear expansion coefficient of 3.2×10^{-6} [\square][1/ $^{\circ}$ C], and a heat-resistant temperature of 800 [\square]800 [$^{\circ}$ C]. For the sake of comparison, the conventional steel ball (SUJ2) has a specific gravity of 7.8, a hardness of 750 [HV], a linear expansion coefficient of 12.5×10^{-6} [\square][1/ $^{\circ}$ C], and a heat-resistant temperature of 180 [\square]180 [$^{\circ}$ C].